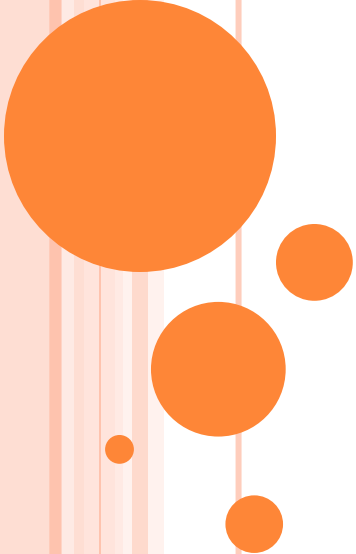




SPARTA: AN EXTRAORDINARY POLIS

Lecture 4: Workshop
The Great Rhetra

PRE-WORKSHOP READING

You should have read:

Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus*

Ogden, D. 'Crooked Speech: The Genesis of the Spartan Rhetra' *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 114. (1994), pp. 85-102.

Kõiv, Mait. "The Origins, Development, and Reliability of the Ancient Tradition about the Formation of the Spartan Constitution" *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Vol. 54, no. 3 (2005), p. 233-264.

Ellen G. Millender "Spartan Literacy Revisited" *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Apr., 2001), pp. 121-164



THE STABILITY OF THE SPARTAN CONSTITUTION

But at last a time came when the tyrants of Athens and the far older tyrannies of the rest of Hellas were, with the exception of those in Sicily, once and for all put down by Lacedaemon; for this city, though after the settlement of the Dorians, its present inhabitants, it suffered from factions for an unparalleled length of time, still at a very early period obtained good laws, and **enjoyed a freedom from tyrants which was unbroken; it has possessed the same form of government for more than four hundred years, reckoning to the end of the late war, and has thus been in a position to arrange the affairs of the other states.** Not many years after the deposition of the tyrants, the battle of Marathon was fought between the Medes and the Athenians.

Thucydides 1.18.1



THE GREAT RHETRA

After dedicating a temple to Zeus Skyllanios and Athena Skyllania, forming tribes (phylai) and creating obai and setting up a Gerousia of 30 including the archagetai. Then from season to season there will be an apella between Babyka and Knakion. So as to introduce and rescind measures. ~To the people should belong the agora~ and the power. If the people should choose a crooked ordinance (rheta), the older-born and leaders are to set it aside.

Plutarch *Lycurgus*, 6.2 and 6.8



RHETRA DEBATE

- Group 1: Pro: The Great Rhetra was written as a single document
- Group 2: Con: The Great Rhetra was written as a single document
- Group 3: Pro: The Great Rhetra was written by Lycurgus
- Group 4: Con: The Great Rhetra was written by Lycurgus
- Group 5: Pro: The Great Rhetra gives the Gerousia and the Kings the power to overturn a vote of the people.
- Group 6: Con: The Great Rhetra gives the Gerousia and the Kings the power to overturn a vote of the people.



PRESENTATION OF THE DEBATES

- Each group will have 3 minutes to present your case, after each side has been presented the motion will be voted on by the Spartan assembly.



POST-WORKSHOP READING

- Cartledge, Paul. *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History, 1300-362 BCE*, London, 2002, p.88-112

